

EDITORIALS

Don't let cell phone co's profits sully our skyline

Rich Rusnok, the representative of Cellular One who addressed the last meeting of the Dallas Township Supervisors — and citizens, we might add, did his best to paint a picture in which a 280-foot tower in one of the township's most visible locations was not a stain on the horizon but a life-saving, convenience-adding improvement for which we should be eternally grateful.

His employers are probably proud of his efforts to convince skeptical residents of the relative value of his company's service. At one point he attempted to use the most base appeal, warning that without the ugly tower we'll see people dying left and right because they can't make a clear cellular phone call. Bullfeathers. Somehow, with the skillful assistance of fire and ambulance volunteers, we've managed to survive until 1997 and haven't lost a whole lot of people due to interrupted cell phone connections.

Rusnok overstepped his bounds with that one, of course, and with other statements such as the one that the Telecommunications Act of 1996 forbids municipalities from preventing the construction of a phone tower wherever his company chooses to put it. The truth is that the Act does not supersede local zoning controls; it simply says that communities cannot completely exclude phone towers from within their borders. Rusnok's distortions notwithstanding, the citizens of Dallas Township, through their elected officials, have the right and responsibility to maintain appropriate zoning standards.

Perhaps Cellular One thought they could roll us country bumpkins, teasing us with the promise of a few bucks a month so they could make thousands handling calls and leasing space on the tower. Besides, how many people in this neck of the woods care about esthetics anyway? The answer is a lot of us, as Rusnok and the supervisors discovered at the meeting.

But they may yet succeed. The Dallas Township Zoning Hearing Board will entertain a proposal at its next meeting for a variance so the tower can be built on township-owned land. That raises another question; should township property be offered for sale or lease to the highest bidder, or should it be reserved for future uses that may benefit everyone in town?

Cellular One has other options, but they find this one the most profitable, and they thought it would be easy. The township isn't desperate for revenue, and shouldn't enter into an agreement that is likely to detract from property values an amount equal to or greater than whatever the lease turns out to be.

We urge everyone who has an interest in this issue — and that includes all township residents and anyone else who doesn't want to see the Back Mountain skyline disfigured by this tower — to attend the meeting Tues., April 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the township building along Route 309.



Fowl weather friends. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

THANKS

Many thanks to egg hunt volunteers, donors

Editor:
The second annual Back Mountain Business and Professional Association (BMBPA) Easter Egg Hunt was held last Saturday for the Back Mountain community and the response was amazing. This year's hunt drew some 1,000 people including approximately 750 children. Prior to the egg hunt kids were visited by Winnie the Pooh, Barney, the Cookie Monster, and the Easter Bunny and then treated to a magic show by Pat Ward. The egg hunt which followed provided every child with an Easter goody bag and a chance at a raffle for another 130 special prizes donated by BMBPA members and non-members.

The Back Mountain Business and Professional Association wishes to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of the all-volun-

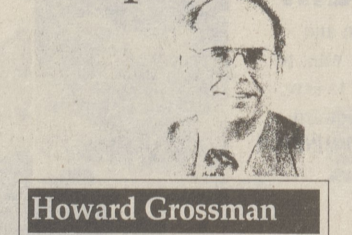
teer Easter Egg Hunt Committee, Doug Stevens, Keith Graham and Tony Kaiser of the security and facilities group of Penn State-Lehman Campus where the hunt was conducted, and those who just wanted to lend a hand for the event. A special thanks to the Back Mountain Business Association member volunteers whose support of events like this are a tribute to the strength of the Back Mountain businesses they represent and our community. They truly deserve our support and thanks.

Domino's Pizza, Wendy's, Dough Co., Burger King, Mark II Family Restaurant, Herr's, TGIF/ Metz Inc., Field House Sporting Goods, Humphrey's, Valentine's, Ochman Coin and Jewelry, ENCON, Sen. Lemmond's Office, Franklin First Federal Bank, Core

State Bank, Pioneer Bank, Penn State Seed, American Automobile Ass., Mr. James Finn, Three Guys Pizza, Overbrook Restaurant, Cleary Forest Products, Offset Paperback, Brock Phillips DVM, Hillman Service Co., Dallas Centre Hardware, Toyon Jewelers, Chris's Auto Repair, Priority Search Inc., Marsh and Yanik, American Asphalt Paving Co., Quality Collision, Pump and Pantry, They Grow So Fast, Orloski's, Francis Collini, MD, Peking Chef, TeleMedia, Walt Disney Co., Penn State University Lehman Campus, Kiwanis Club of Dallas, PNC Bank and The Dallas Post.

Maryellen Giannuzzi, President
Peter Restaino, Committee Chairman
Back Mt. Business and Professional Assn.

The economic viewpoint



Howard Grossman

New opportunities may abound throughout the Commonwealth, including Northeastern Pennsylvania relative to sports and exposition facilities. With the publication of the 138 page report of the Governor's Task Force on Sports and Exposition Facilities, the recommendations in the report should be studied carefully by anyone interested in exploring future state aid for sports and exposition facilities.

With the funding already in place for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Convention Center and Civic Area, the new recommendations do not apply to that facility. There is the case, however, that future expansions or modernization of facilities within the region that are categorized as sports and exposition type may be affected by the recommendations which are eventually implemented by the Commonwealth General Assembly or the Administration.

The recommendations range in many directions with respect to subsequent funding or revenue sources to help expand, modernize or construct new facilities. With the focus on the potential for new stadiums in Philadelphia and

New opportunities in sports facilities

Pittsburgh, the potential for use of any of the recommendations in other geographic areas of Pennsylvania may be downplayed. The fact exists, however, that other regions of Pennsylvania may be affected by the results of the new statewide study.

Key recommendations in the study include the following:

- Legislation should be passed to create a Pennsylvania Stadium and Exposition Facilities Financing Authority to serve as the mechanism for Commonwealth participation in sports stadium, cultural facility, and convention center projects.

- The Authority should be an active participant in the negotiation of financial arrangements between the owner of the proposed facility and the team owner, convention center operator, cultural facility users, and other parties that may be essential to the long-term success of the proposed project.

- The Task Force recommends consideration for privatization of the state liquor store system to fund the Authority and to provide an endowment for the Authority.

- The Commonwealth should closely monitor and oppose the "stop tax" - Exempt Arena Debt Issuance Act (S.1880) currently pending before the US Congress as it would have a significant impact upon the ability of tax ex-

empt bond financing to be used for professional sports facility projects.

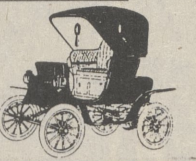
- In order for municipal governments to fulfill their roles in the proposed public-private partnerships for facilities development, the General Assembly should enact necessary legislation to empower municipalities with authorization to generate a full range of user-oriented revenue relating to sports facilities, cultural facilities and convention.

Sports represents a substantial part of Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy and quality of life. There is a strong high school sports tradition across the region. Furthermore, convention and exposition facilities are key to travel development and tourism and to the continuing attractions of a multi-state, statewide and sometimes national perspective to the region.

The report should be thoroughly reviewed and assessed by Northeastern Pennsylvania public and private sector organizations. Those who are interested in examining the study and its results may contact the EDCNP, 1151 Oak Street, Pittston, PA 18640.

Howard Grossman is Executive Director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - April 9, 1937

NEW PLAN FOR BY-PASS SKIRTS DALLAS BOROUGH

Faced with the possibility of continued opposition in Luzerne to any attempt to construct a highway which will avoid that borough's Main Street, proponents of the long-delayed by-pass this week were studying a new plan to skirt the borough, thus removing the job from Luzerne's jurisdiction.

Having abandoned two plans for acquiring a new home, members of the Shavertown Volunteer Fire Co. will have a third proposal presented to them at their next meeting Monday evening and a final decision on the matter is expected. The movement to buy or build a home for the Shavertown Company has been under consideration for some time and early in February with \$2,700 already in their treasury, the firemen agreed to look over properties with the view of acquiring a home.

50 Years Ago - April 11, 1947

NEW HOMES BUILT ON MEMORIAL HIGHWAY

Three homes are completed, three more under construction and the cellars of three more are being excavated on the plot of land on Veteran's Memorial Highway beyond Natona Mills is being developed by Bernard Banks and Alton Steele Co. Before the end of the year as many as 50 new houses may be built on the plot if the demand for homes meets the expectations of the developers.

The big new plant of Natona Mills on Veterans Memorial Highway is rapidly approaching completion. If all goes according to schedule, Sordoni Construction Co. expects to have its part of the job finished by mid-May.

Now playing at Shaver Theatre, "Big Sleep" with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall.

40 Years Ago - April 5, 1957

DALLAS SCHOOL BOARD ALMOST LOSES CONTROL

It required the patience of Job to keep the special meeting of Dallas Area School Boards from getting out of hand Tuesday evening, but acting president Francis Ambrose of the joint board had it and did a commendable job of trying to hold the boards in line and within the framework of the jointure. "We are met here to remove a little difficulty that has arisen in the jointure. I hardly know where the solution of a situation such as this should begin," Amrose said. "But I hope we can agree to agree."

Commonwealth Telephone Company's Back Mountain exchanges will have attractive code names after Sept. 1. Dial "ORchard for Dallas"; "NEptune for Harveys Lake"; and "GRreenleaf for Sweet Valley" will remind everyone that even Telephone Companies have imagination. A huckster from Madison Avenue with a rural frame of mind couldn't have selected better.

30 Years Ago - April 6, 1967

CITIZENS DISCUSS AMBULANCE PROBLEMS

Over 50 interested citizens turned out Sunday at Jackson Fire Hall to discuss problems of ambulance service for the township. The meeting was called by the Board of Supervisors who felt a moral responsibility in seeing to it that such a service is available to people they serve; although they are not legally obligated to do so.

Dallas School Board awarded bids Wednesday evening for the senior high addition work to begin shortly. Grosek & Sons were awarded the contract for General Construction at the low figure of \$683,427. A larger library, science and music area will be provided, courtyard will be converted into a larger dining area and part will be used for instruction.

20 Years Ago - April 7, 1977

THREE ANNOUNCE CANDIDACY FOR JUDGE

Three candidates for district justice for District 3-8 presented their candidacies and fielded questions from the floor during the regular meeting of the Dallas Rotary Club at Irem Temple Country Club last Thursday. Incumbent Magistrate Leonard Harvey, and candidates Donald Jones and Henry Tuck each presented brief statements regarding their position and qualifications.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



I was invited to a "focus group" last week, by a survey firm employed by a health care concern that shall remain unnamed. They wanted to gather impressions about mergers and other changes in the health care system that have already taken place or may become reality in the near future. It was a pretty sophisticated group that had a pretty good understanding of what's happened and what may be coming. A common concern was that smaller communities — and the Wilkes-Barre area is considered small by large firms — would lose services as hospitals merge. Another fear is restricted access to special care. If your health plan is allied with a particular hospital, for example, will you be allowed opinions only by the physicians who practice there?

Gary Booth, an active member of Dallas Fire and Ambulance, sat next to me, and he had insight into questions about emergency care. He said all Wilkes-Barre hospitals were closed to emergency admissions for a day last month, something he hadn't seen in many years of service. That's clearly a problem if it occurs with any regularity; every minute counts in an emergency, and having to travel to Berwick or Scranton will surely cost lives.

A new subscriber called to cancel last week. After getting a single issue, she said the paper had too much advertising in it, and she didn't want it anymore. I wish it were so. Actually, there's a complementary relationship between advertising and news; the more ads we have, the more space we make available for news. The Post runs pretty "loose" compared to some papers, with news taking up much more than half the total space most weeks. That's because we want to get as much of the contributed and staff written copy in as possible. So, next time your item doesn't make it as quickly as you'd like, to tell some stores they should advertise more. Then we'll have more space for the news, too.

Your letters are welcome at The Dallas Post
Our office is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Or mail your letter to us at 607 Main Rd., Dallas, PA 18612, or fax to (717) 675-3650.

The Dallas Post

Published Weekly By Bartsen Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
717-675-5211

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